

Minutes of the Harworth and Bircotes Town Council extra ordinary meeting held on Monday 16th June 2025 at 6.30pm at the Town Hall, Scrooby Road, Bircotes, DN11 8JP.

Present: Cllr Evans (Chair), Cllr Jones, Cllr Flynn, Cllr James, Cllr S Harrison and Cllr A Harrison

Others: Mrs Davies (Officer) and Mr Sewart (Deputy Clerk) and a member of the public

17792 To receive and consider any apologies and reasons for absence

Cllr S Harrison purposed to approve apologies and reasons for absence from Cllr Wratten, Cllr Whitehead and Cllr Smith; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

17793 To receive Declaration of Interest on any item on the agenda

No declaration of interests received.

17794 To suspend the meeting to hold a public session and receive reports from Police, District & County Councillors

The Chair suspended the meeting for the public session, no questions raised.

The Chair gave her District Council report - It was noted that the Bassetlaw District Council has been identified as an early adopter of the Governments High Street Rental Auctions, and therefore, it has new powers to require landlords to rent out persistent vacant commercial properties to new tenants. This will be addressing the empty shops on the High Street. Worksop, Retford and Harworth high streets will all be part of the scheme. The Officer will be contacting the BDC's lead on this topic to a further Town Council meeting to explain what the scheme is all about.

17795 To consider the final Internal Audit report and discuss additional suggestions and earmarked reserves for 2025-26

The Officer previously circulated copies of the interim and final audit reports for the Councillors to consider. All the internal control objectives were given positive responses from the Internal Auditor; box F for petty cash was not covered as the Town Council does not hold petty cash; box K for certified exemption was not covered as the Town Council as not previously certified has exempt.

The Internal Auditors overall conclusion reads *"there are effective controls within the Council.*

My interim audit was undertaken in January 2025, and I am satisfied that sufficient evidence has been available to support this conclusion. Additional work in May 2025 confirmed this position, I have entered positive assessments on the Internal Audit section of the AGAR.

The council currently holds a substantial level of general reserves; However, I am assured that this is being used appropriately and will be significantly reduce in 2025-26."

The Officer explained the ear marked reserves will be greatly increased this year due the amounts of work required and new projects plus current funding pots that require increasing – see below.

The Auditor commented the fidelity guarantee is set at £500,00, which is less than the maximum funds held by the Council. It was recommended that this is increased. The Officer reported that the increase of the Fidelity guarantee insurance from £500.00 to £1,000,000 has taken place.

The Auditor recommended that the Council reviews its hall hire charges and minutes that they reviews have taken place. The Officer reported that this review will be taking place in November in line with the preparing of the budget for 2026-27.

At this point Cllr Flynn left the meeting.

Additional Ear Marked Reserves

The Officer explained that the ear marked reserves will be increased this year due the amounts of work required, new projects, plus current funding pots that require increasing.

The Officer went through the EMRs that were already approved this year and on-going.

The following ear marked reserves were considered:

- Recommended increasing the fund for the community hubs project rather than hold the funding in the general reserves £50k
- We have already approved to install an electric supply into the Styrrup Road cemetery several years ago, it was approved that this needs moving forward and fresh quotations obtained – additional EMR may be required
- The approval to extend the roadway into the second phase of the Styrrup Road cemetery was several years ago; again, it is now time to obtain up to date quotations for the road and a turning circle for the funeral cars – additional EMR may be required
- Following a discussion regarding costs e.g. lighting small Christmas trees above the shops, to replace of wrapping of the birch trees along the shop front/London Plane tree on the village green, and streetlights along Scrooby Road it was approved that a £10k Christmas maintenance fund would be established.
- A fund is already in place for work required in the Tickhill Road cemetery, mainly the gate and fencing and CCTV cameras after anti-social behaviour that has been taking place in the cemetery. It was approved to move forward and obtain quotations to replace/refurbish the gates and fencing as required – additional EMRs may be required.
- Suggestions were put forward to improve the Tickhill Road cemetery's soil banks and possibly make flower beds etc., it was approved to explore ideas further
- The road leading to the Tickhill Road cemetery requires resurfacing due to deterioration of the area near to Tickhill Road. A previous quotation was several years ago and requires updating; £15k to put aside towards the repairs
- The Officer discussed a piece of equipment that would help with ground maintenance- it was approved to obtain prices and information for the councillors to view

Cllr A Harrison proposed to note the Internal Audit report and approved suggestions made for earmarked reserves for 2025-26; this was seconded by Cllr Jones and resolved by the Council.

17796 To receive and note the AGAR Annual Internal Audit Report for the year 2024-25

The Officer previously circulated the Annual Internal Audit Report for the Councillors to view.

Cllr S Harrison proposed to accept the Annual Internal Audit Report; this was seconded by Cllr A Harrison and resolved by the Council.

17797 To consider the AGAR Section 1 Annual Governance Statement for the year 2024-25

Copies of the Annual Governance Statement were previously circulated so that the Councillors could consider their responses.

The Officer went through the assertions and explained what each one covers, and evidence of how the council achieves this.

Cllr A Harrison proposed to approve the Annual Governance Statements; this was seconded by Cllr James and resolved by the Council.

17798 To consider the AGAR Section 2 Accounting Statements for the year 2024-25

The copies of the Annual Statements were previously circulated so that the Councillors could consider their responses.

After consideration, Cllr S Harrison proposed to approve the Accounting Statements for 2024-25; this was seconded by Cllr James and resolved by the Council.

17799 The Responsible Finance Officer to set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights

The Officer has set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights on Tuesday 17th June to Monday 28th July 2025.

Cllr Jones proposed to accept the commencement date as above, this was seconded by Cllr S Harrison and resolved by the Council.

17800 To review the Councillor's responsibilities

The Councillor's responsibilities for 2025-26 are:

Finance Committee: Cllr Evans, Cllr Jones, Cllr Flynn, Cllr Smith and Cllr James

HR Committee: Cllr Evans, Cllr Jones, Cllr Wratten, Cllr James and Cllr Flynn

Cemetery Inspections: Tickhill Road – Cllr S Harrison ; Styrrup Road Cemetery – Cllr Jones

Cllr A Harrison proposed to approve the above responsibilities; this was seconded by Cllr James and resolved by the Council.

17801 To review the representatives for external groups

Cllr Jones proposed the representative for the Tenants & Residents Association to be shared with Cllr Flynn and Cllr S Harrison; this was seconded by Cllr James.

17802 To review the bank mandates and signatories

Cllr James proposed to keep the current mandates and signatories of Cllr Evans, Cllr S Harrison, Cllr Smith, Cllr James and Cllr Flynn; this was seconded by Cllr Jones and resolved by the Council.

At this point Cllr Sidwell joined the meeting.

17803 To review the Model Publication Scheme

The Officer previously circulated copies of the Publication Scheme for the Councillors to review.

The Officer went through the document and noted some updates.

After discussion, Cllr S Harrison proposed to approve the updated Publication Scheme; this was seconded by Cllr Jones and resolved by the Council.

17804 To receive items for information only or next agenda

- Cllr Sidwell gave an update on the Tom Simpson Cycling Festival which is taking place on September 7th-14th
- The Officer reported that the Deputy Clerk has been included on the van insurance

17805 Time and date of the next scheduled Town Council meeting

The next scheduled Town Council meeting will be on Monday 1st September 2025 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Scrooby Road, Bircotes, DN11 8JP.